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SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND IPA, INL FOR PFORZHEIMER, NSC FOR
ABRAMS/PASCUAL/SINGH

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/08/2018

TAGS: [KWBG](#) [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: PA NATIONAL SECURITY COMMANDER ASSESSES SECURITY
THREATS, TRAINING/EQUIPMENT NEEDS

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary. In August 2-7 conversations, National Security Forces (NSF) commander MG Thiab Mustafa Ali (Abu al-Fatah) told PolOff and POL FSN that the NSF is leading small-scale/local security efforts throughout the West Bank targeting armed/organized criminal and terrorist suspects, and has a large-scale action planned for the Hebron area pending GOI clearance. MG Ali said the PA's top West Bank security threat is the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades while Hizb al-Tahrir poses a public order problem but not a strategic threat. He said the NSF is prepared to conduct basic and advanced security training for battalion-sized units in Jericho using veteran NSF trainers. MG Ali expressed concern about the suitability of USG-provided vehicles, calling the trucks unsuitable for patrolling Palestinian cities and too expensive to operate and maintain. End summary.

NSF Operational Priorities; al-Aqsa
Brigades Militants Still Pose Threat

12. (C) In an August 2 meeting in Ramallah with PolOff and August 6-7 phonecalls with POL FSN, MG Ali said the NSF is leading small-scale/local security efforts throughout the West Bank targeting armed/organized criminal and terrorist suspects with intelligence-driven raids. He said the NSF has developed plans for larger deployments as threats and political guidance dictate, but the only large-scale action that he assesses urgent is for the Hebron area, and so far the GOI has denied clearance.

13. (C) MG Ali said the PA's top West Bank security threat is al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades cells. He said several such cells remain armed and organized. He said Hamas has strong political support in many parts of the West Bank, but with limited armed capabilities in the West Bank is a lesser danger, while Hizb al-Tahrir poses a public order problem but not a strategic threat.

NSF Prepared for West Bank Training

14. (C) The NSF is prepared to conduct basic and advanced security training for battalion-sized units in Jericho, MG Ali said, using veteran NSF trainers while welcoming foreign observers. He said he is grateful for international assistance and welcomes help to defray expenses, but emphasized that local training would reduce costs and complications, focus training on local geographic and security conditions, build the NSF's organic training capacity and ensure that units rotating through training are immediately available for action if an emergency happens. He said the main training complication in Jericho is IDF clearance for use of the rifle range, which he said is usually granted but is necessary every time PA security

forces fire live ammunition.

Discontent with USG-Procured Vehicles

15. (C) MG Ali told PolOff and POL FSN that neither he nor his logistics chief were consulted about the specifications of the 145 Ford F-150 trucks provided by the USG. He said his engineering department submitted a list of extensive problems with the vehicles. He said the large trucks are unsuitable for patrolling in Palestinian cities, as they are too large for narrow streets, and their 8-cylinder, 4600cc engines burn fuel at 9-14 miles/gallon and require much more engine oil, costing twice as much as other NSF vehicles to operate. He said the Ford dealer in Ramallah does not stock spare parts for the trucks, requiring specially-ordered, expensive imported parts. MG Ali also complained that neither the cars nor their engine blocks have engraved serial numbers, and the PA has to finish engraving before the trucks can be registered. He said all but one of the trucks remain parked in Jericho pending consultation on the above issues and PA registration.

ALLES